

Learning Support (Special Education) Update – Next Steps

Proposal

- 1 This paper provides an update of the design of a new learning support service delivery model and seeks Cabinet agreement to pilot the model in one region, with a progress report back in March 2017.
- 2 This paper also advises Cabinet of the proposed next steps to improve the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), Communication Services and Behaviour Services, while maintaining the quality and level of provision for children and young people already receiving learning support services.

Executive summary

- 3 In July 2016 Cabinet agreed to strengthen the inclusiveness of the education system by undertaking detailed design of a new learning support service delivery model that is child-centred with personalised plans, collaborative, and has a single point of contact and accountability. Cabinet also agreed to review investment decisions to improve efficiency and flexibility of ORS, Communications Services, and Behaviour Services, and to change terminology to improve the inclusiveness of the education system [CAB-16-MIN-0310 refers].
- 4 Our Government has a clear expectation that the education system will meet the educational achievement challenge for every child and young person. To achieve our expectation we need a sustainable, integrated, fit-for-purpose and inclusive education system that puts progress and success for all children and young people at the heart of teaching and learning.
- 5 Strengthening inclusion by updating the learning support (formerly special education) system is part of our Education Work Programme [CAB Min (14) 1/14 refers]. While the education system has become much more inclusive over recent years¹, more needs to be done.
- 6 Consultation undertaken by the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) from June to December 2015 showed that over 3,650 parents, whānau, schools/kura and local communities were concerned that the system is complex to navigate, slow in providing support, and has too many layers of process and bureaucracy. Twenty-two improvement projects are underway to address particular barriers but a more comprehensive systemic improvement is needed.
- 7 Cabinet asked for a report back in March 2017 on proposed policy changes and progress with implementation. In preparation for that report back, I am seeking Cabinet endorsement to progress two areas:
 - 7.1 a pilot of a new streamlined service delivery model that is easy to access, timely and appropriate by providing for:
 - i. a single point of access

¹ An Education Review Office evaluation report in 2015 showed that over three quarters of the schools in the sample (78 percent) were found to be mostly inclusive of students with additional learning needs, compared with only half in a 2010 survey.

- ii. local learning support teams to triage and integrate flexible, tailored and dedicated solutions for learners
- iii. a Lead Practitioner assigned to be the single point of contact
- iv. the collection of individual student data related to learning support and achievement

A pilot is necessary to test, measure and evaluate the validity of the new service design within a contained sample group. Lessons from the evaluation throughout, results and outcomes of the pilot will inform the successful implementation nationally of the new service design.

I propose to undertake the pilot in the Wairariki/Bay of Plenty Ministry region because of its size, diversity, incidence of learning challenges, and the experience of the leadership and staff;

7.2 The review and improvement of investment decisions for ORS, Communications Services and Behaviour Services.

- 8 The main focus of this paper is about how we perform the work to focus on better provision of learning support. We anticipate that the work will be done by a mixed model of public, private and Non Government Organisations (NGO) providers, and how this works in practice will vary across locations. From a design point of view, the mix of provision will be a specific component within the trial and an aspect of the evaluation.
- 9 I will provide a further report back in March 2017 about the pilot's progress, the mixed service delivery model, and the review of investment decisions.
- 10 There was consistent feedback throughout the consultation process that the term 'special education' has become out-of-date, with the term 'learning support' being preferred. The Ministry is considering the implications of changing the language in the Education Act, and exploring whether an Education Bill in 2018 will be required.
- 11 This work is connected to, and consistent with, the Education System Funding Review.

Background

- 12 The three year education work programme, approved by Cabinet in November 2014 [CAB Min (14) 1/14], provides a coherent set of actions to improve key legislative and funding settings, and to update the education system. Priorities include building quality teaching and leadership and improving collaboration around learner pathways.
- 13 The work programme identified strengthening inclusion, through updating the learning support (special education) system. The Government invests about \$590 million a year in specialist education services, additional teacher funding and school operational grants for children and young people needing additional support to access the curriculum and learn. About a third of this funding is controlled directly by the Ministry; the remainder is allocated to schools, including residential and special schools.
- 14 The current organisation of learning support has developed in ad hoc ways over time reacting to particular areas of need, rather than being understood or managed as a total system. As a result, the system is comprised of multiple, discrete sources of expertise and funding with limited continuity between these. Particular issues include:

- 14.1 the system has become highly compartmentalised and fragmented and access to specialist support is complicated for parents and schools;
- 14.2 there are no whole-of-system parameters to measure the success of the investment;
- 14.3 while demographic changes and growing waiting lists show that demand is rising, an investment approach has not been used to ensure best use of funds.
- 15 During 2015, the Ministry engaged with over 3,650 parents, whānau, educators, the disability sector and many others to help identify the right service and system improvements. I want to build on the momentum and commitments made through that process, to see individuals getting the right support at the right time to access the curriculum and learn.
- 16 In July 2016 Cabinet agreed the following changes to the learning support system:
 - 16.1 detailed design of a new service delivery model which has a single point of contact within the education system, simplifies the system, and ensures learning support is easy to access, timely and appropriate;
 - 16.2 reviewing ORS, Communication Services and Behaviour Services as there are opportunities to improve the efficiency and flexibility of these services;
 - 16.3 changing the language used to describe the system, as the use of the term “special needs” singles people out, and, by concentrating on students’ deficits, can marginalise individuals and create barriers to a fully inclusive education system.
- 17 Twenty-two improvement projects were implemented from December 2015 and have been informing developments to date. The learnings will continue to inform the planning and implementation for the new service delivery model.
- 18 The changes I am proposing in this paper are aligned with the Education System Funding Review work. The proposed new funding system for schooling and early learning includes a component to address additional funding for individual challenges. Detailed design work is underway on the allocation for learning support needs that services and schools are expected to meet from within their funding [CAB-16-MIN 0545 refers].
- 19 The changes also align with work taking place under the Disability Action Plan such as the cross-agency transformation of the disability support system and the Ministry of Education-led Good Start In Life programme. These aim to place children at the centre of the system and make it easier for them and their families/whānau to navigate the system and to access the supports that they need.
- 20 Strengthening links with the Ministry of Health’s work to improve the reach and effectiveness of Child Development Services (CDS), will support the changes this paper proposes, as CDS shares many clients and some staff with the Ministry of Education’s Learning Support (Special Education) services. This will provide an opportunity to ensure that the services are aligned, reduce the risk of duplication and ensure that workforce capability is distributed in a way that best meets the needs of children and young people.

New service delivery model and collection of individual student data

- 21 The Learning Support (Special Education) Update will make learning support easier to access, child focused, flexible and better connected with other social services to ensure children and young people are supported throughout their whole learning pathway.
- 22 I propose a new service delivery model as follows:
 - 22.1 *a single point of access* – for parents and schools at the first stage of seeking support for their child, through an 0800 number, by email or through an online tool to an access team. Over the years the system has developed multiple gateways and an inconsistent process for parents and schools to request and access support. The new single point of access will deliver a consistent and easier process for parents, schools/kura and Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL) to engage with. Referral to an access team could also be by a Children's Team or the new Ministry for Vulnerable Children | Oranga Tamariki;
 - 22.2 *local learning support teams to triage and integrate flexible, tailored and dedicated solutions for learners* – teams of local learning support decision makers will be formed to triage and respond to requests for support referred from the new access step. The local learning support team will provide parents/whānau with some immediate steps that can be taken, and develop a learning support plan with them;
 - 22.3 *assigning a Lead Practitioner to be the single point of management* – currently children with assessed learning support needs receive assistance from multiple parts of the education sector, and it has not always been clear to parents who they should contact. To address this, a Lead Practitioner will be designated as the single point of contact for the learner, parents, whānau, educators and other involved people. The Lead Practitioner could be a specialist Ministry employee (see paragraph 23), a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour or other professional who is best-placed to fulfil this role. The Lead Practitioner will ensure the learning support plan is implemented, adjusted and reviewed as needed;
 - 22.4 *the collection of individual student data related to learning support and achievement* – students' learning support data will be gathered and monitored by the Ministry to inform appropriate decision-making for learning support needs into the future. This will provide a whole-of-system identification of children and young people being supported and improve the accountability of the system.
- 23 Over time, I expect the new service delivery model to increasingly be delivered within and across CoL, rather than within and across individual schools. However, in the short term, the model provides a process for both CoL and individual schools/kura and early learning providers to receive support.
- 24 The new service delivery model will cover the full range of learning support services and will utilise a mixed model of delivery using a combination of public, private and NGO providers. The Ministry employs front-line staff covering nine specialist areas – advisors on deaf children, early intervention teachers, kaitakawaenga, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists,

regional school-wide practitioners, special education advisors, and speech language therapists. The new model will provide a framework for better integrating these services, along with the various supports provided by schools, into a single, child-centred response.

- 25 The new model will also provide better data about which child or young person has received what learning supports and what outcomes have resulted. This will give a child-centred view of effectiveness, rather than the current compartmentalised service-by-service view, and help to better understand demand and effectiveness across the system.
- 26 Further detail on the current system and proposed changes is provided in Appendix 1 (the current state of service delivery), Appendix 2 (the future state) and Appendix 3 (an example of a learner experience in the future state).
- 27 Engagement with the sector during the 2015 consultation showed that schools and parents were supportive of an integrated approach to learning support that would remove multiple assessment points and provide holistic support for children and young people. The proposed new service design meets these expectations for a streamlined and easier to navigate service.
- 28 Stakeholders were also supportive of a single contact person to work with the child throughout the time they receive learning support, rather than the fragmented approach to relationship management that exists currently. The assigned lead practitioner roles directly respond to this feedback.

Next steps and timeframes for the proposed new service model

- 29 To assess the appropriateness and practicality of the new service design model for national implementation, I propose to undertake a pilot in one Ministry region, to identify what works and areas that need further development, as follows:
 - 29.1 the new model can be piloted in the Waiariki / Bay of Plenty Ministry region from the start of the 2017 school year. This region is suitable for this pilot due to its smaller number of schools (there are nearly 2,500 schools in 10 regions across New Zealand), diversity of ethnicity, and distribution of learners in both urban and rural settings. The region has 112 schools, 45,000 learners and 14 CoL formed. Five CoL have had their achievement challenges endorsed, of which three identified learning support achievement challenges;
 - 29.2 a project team and governance for the trial, responsible for managing the pilot, resource planning, risk management, development of tools, systems and processes, including:
 - 29.2.1 support for the Director of Education to engage with family/whānau, the sector and other stakeholders in their region to take a co-design approach, provide feedback and fine tune implementation. This will ensure local solutions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the children and young people in that community;
 - 29.2.2 operational guidance on the end to end process including the access and triage steps;
 - 29.2.3 development of evaluation approach and criteria, including resource implications;

29.2.4 a live issues management team to ensure an agile approach is taken to issues so that they are addressed immediately, and learnings are built into the practice on the ground;

29.2.5 technical systems and processes for phone, email, storage and reporting.

- 30 Piloting the proposed new model will allow the Ministry to better understand the mix of service delivery across public, private and NGO providers resourcing implications, assess additional capability requirements to implement the new model and identify any supports for regional decision-making while enabling central visibility of cost pressures.
- 31 The Ministry will engage with key learning support stakeholders throughout the pilot to further develop the design and inform learnings for national implementation. Feedback from families/whānau and education professionals will be critical to ensure issues identified during consultation undertaken in 2015, such as the system being overly complex, have been addressed.
- 32 Engagement with key national stakeholders will also inform the success of the pilot and national implementation. The Ministry will work with the Human Rights Commission, the Disability Commissioner, the Children's Commissioner, CCS Disability Action, IHC, Autism New Zealand, the Special Education Principals' Association New Zealand (SEPANZ) and other Disabled Person's Organisations to determine the best mechanism to formalise these relationships.
- 33 The Ministry will provide me with regular updates on progress of the pilot and will follow standard project management methodology to manage, mitigate and escalate risk where appropriate.
- 34 The following key success factors and indicators will be collected by the Ministry as the pilot progresses to measure the effectiveness of the model, and inform the focus of the ongoing evaluation:
 - 34.1 increased family/whānau satisfaction with the access to, and quality of, services provided;
 - 34.2 increased teacher engagement with learning support services;
 - 34.3 increased collaboration within CoL to demonstrate progress towards addressing learning support achievement challenges;
 - 34.4 increased rates of attendance and engagement amongst students accessing services or supports;
 - 34.5 reduced times to access learning support services.
- 35 These high level measures will inform the report back to Cabinet in March 2017 on progress of the pilot and the options for national implementation. Learnings around the service delivery across public, private and NGOs, and how this has contributed to the success factors will also be reported, with implications for national implementation considered. Over the longer term, the Ministry will collect individual student data to track impact and to understand the effectiveness of learning support interventions, to further inform the development of the model.
- 36 Appendix 4 provides an outline of how the sector will be engaged throughout the pilot and implementation.

Improving investment decisions for ORS, Communication Services and Behaviour Services

- 37 The new service delivery model outlined above will encompass the full range of learning support services. Intervening early in the presentation of need, at any age, is a key feature of the new model. In a lot of cases this will reduce more intensive services in later years and as such prevent the associated increase in costs. However, there will be some cases where the need for learning support is enduring and will require ongoing support. In addition, the Ministry is seeking to make better investment decisions to improve the efficiency and flexibility of services in the three key areas of ORS, Communication Services and Behaviour Services. Progress is outlined below.

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme

- 38 The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) provides support to students with the highest levels of disability to stay in education until they are 21 if they choose to do so. ORS funding provides for additional teacher support, teachers' aides, a consumables grant and for specialists employed by the Ministry or contracted by the fund holder (a school/kura).
- 39 There are 9,093 students currently receiving ORS support. Of these, 1,232 are in the 18-21 age bracket which represents 13.55% of the total. The ORS budget is approximately \$180 million per year. The proportion of the ORS budget for students 18-21 is approximately \$24 million.²
- 40 The purpose of setting the upper age limit at 21 years is to acknowledge that it may take longer for some young people with disabilities to achieve their educational potential. However, there may be other options and choices better suited to some individuals and their families which could be more beneficial than remaining at school. For some young people, this may be in the form of mainstream courses or work-based training with appropriate learning supports provided. For others it may be specialised supported learning programmes such as that offered by the Wellington Institute of Technology to prepare disabled students for employment. ORS funding could be used to support a student's enrolment in these types of programme, in addition to the option of supporting the student to remain at school.
- 41 The expectations of people with disabilities have also changed. They have told us that they want more choice and control over their lives, to take part in the community, and to have opportunities like other New Zealanders. This is driving changes in the disability support system through the transformation work happening across the health and social services sector under the auspices of the Ministerial Committee on Disability Issues, which now meets as part of SOC.
- 42 I have asked the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Ministries of Health and Social Development, to develop options that will enable students to exercise choice about how they remain in education until they are 21, both by making mainstream options accessible and providing specialist options where necessary. The development of the options will take into account:
- 42.1 the Enabling Good Lives evaluation results³;

² Data as of 25 August 2016.

³ The demonstration offered planning and facilitation to young people with disabilities and their families and greater choice and control over how resources are used to support the life they want to lead. The

- 42.2 educational options other than schools, such as the specialist courses offered by some tertiary providers;
- 42.3 evidence about educational progress and achievement and other outcomes, including wellbeing, for this age group;
- 42.4 the views of the disability sector;
- 42.5 the Disability Action Plan⁴ priority to increase the number of disabled people who transition from school and tertiary education into employment, which the Ministry of Education is also leading.

Communication Services

- 43 Communication skills are critical for achievement in literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and social competence and wellbeing. These are core skills that children require if they are to achieve successful educational outcomes.
- 44 Children and young people, families/whānau and teachers can access Speech Language Therapy through three core services – the Early Intervention Service (pre-school), Communication Services, including the language and learning initiative (for the first three years of school) and ORS.
- 45 About \$19m was invested in Communication Services in 2015/16, which reached about 6,500 children, their parents, families/whānau, and ECE workers. There has been rising demand for services year on year, but the Ministry is limited in what more can be provided within the current FTE cap. The Ministry currently manages demand through the use of contractors in order to stay within the cap, and this is costly.
- 46 There are currently 286 FTE speech language therapists who contribute to the specialist component of Communication Services (along with other specialist services such as early intervention). This is more than a third of total Ministry frontline specialist staff providing learning support.
- 47 There are problems with the way the services are targeted now, and there are gaps in coverage. Some children experiencing communication difficulties are unable to access services because they do not meet criteria, there is limited specialist support for children with moderate communication needs in the first three years of school, and no specialist support for children and young people with communication needs after the first three years at school (unless they are ORS funded).
- 48 The Select Committee Inquiry on Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and ASD is also exploring recommendations to improve language development and achievement, including options for earlier identification and resources for literacy, language and learning needs. The Government will respond to the Select Committee Inquiry once it has tabled its report.

project worked with school leavers aged 18-21 years receiving ORS funding between 2013 and June 2016.

⁴ A Cabinet report back from the Minister for Disability Issues on the Disability Action Plan is planned for December 2016.

- 49 I propose to explore different ways to deliver Communication Services to learners, especially in the early years, while maintaining the quality and level of provision for children and young people already receiving learning support services. Older children will continue to receive services based on their needs. Over time, it is expected that changing the way services are provided, especially in the early years, will lead to lower demand amongst older children.
- 50 In order to give choice and flexibility, and to meet rising demand in the short term without removing services from other areas of learning support, I propose exploring improvements by:
- 50.1 extending contract partnerships with existing NGOs who have the required capability to provide support for enhanced communications services in ECE;
- 50.2 contracting provision through private providers;
- 50.3 increasing the volume of speech language therapists within the Ministry of Education, which would involve excluding speech language therapists from the core government administration cap (similar to other agencies' frontline staff).
- 51 The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education will also be improving how information is shared, beginning with the B4 School Check [SOC-16-MIN-0120 refers]. I will report back on progress with the options and information sharing in March 2017.

Behaviour Services

- 52 The Ministry of Education funds, delivers and purchases a range of behaviour services, from systemic interventions to intensive collaborative cross agency work with children, young people and their families who have complex needs. The range of services is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Range of Behaviour Services

Scope	Description	Value (2015/16) and scale
Prevention / early intervention approach	Services and programmes purchased by the Ministry of Education to put in place systems and practices to create an environment in which children and young people can make positive behaviour choices (e.g. Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) and Incredible Years Teacher and Incredible Years Parent)	About \$32m Reaches around 270,000 students, 18,000 parents and 12,000 teachers

Moderate behavioural learning needs	Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLBB) ⁵	About 900 RTLBBs, who are employed by Boards of Trustees, at a cost of \$88m Reaches about 21,000 school age children
Specialist services for individuals with complex needs	Intensive support for a small group of children and young people who could not otherwise be included in ordinary schools to enable them to safely attend school (e.g. Severe Behaviour Service and Intensive Wraparound Service)	About \$55m Reaches about 4000 children

- 53 I have asked the Ministry to work with the RTLBB service to better identify which learners across schools receive RTLBB services and Ministry behaviour services, and at what point in their pathway. This will help identify where to better target learning support, and where there may be gaps or high levels of unmet demand across the system.
- 54 The Ministry will look at current school-wide practices (e.g. Incredible Years / Positive Behaviour for Learning) and identify how these services can be more efficiently delivered through CoL as a vehicle for the learner pathway and end-to-end service delivery, and ensure greater responsiveness to local needs and demand.

Changing the language

- 55 Throughout the 2015 consultation there was consistent feedback that moving towards more inclusive language would be desirable, away from “special education” felt to be somewhat stigmatising and old fashioned, towards “learning support” with its recognition that many young people need support at some point in their progress through their education pathway. Following Cabinet agreement in July 2016 the Ministry is considering the implications of changing the language in the Education Act and exploring whether an Education Bill in 2018 will be required.

Risks

- 56 The new service model could lead to changes in demand and timing of interventions that put more pressure on resources. This risk can be mitigated through carefully targeted interventions with clear accountability for children and young people’s progress.
- 57 The disability sector or parents may consider their rights are being undermined if they perceive that resources are being shifted to other areas. Meaningful engagement with parents, whānau and key stakeholders will help mitigate this risk.

⁵ Over the past four years, the Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLBB) service has undergone changes to governance and management of the service, bringing RTLBBs into 40 clusters accountable to Boards of Trustees.

Communications and stakeholder engagement

- 58 During the pilot, the Ministry will seek input from relevant groups, in order to design local solutions that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all learners. This will also be reflected in the evaluation, and is a key outcome sought in the pilot. A communications and engagement plan and activities will support the implementation of the new service delivery model.
- 59 The Ministry will establish clear communication channels and points of contact throughout implementation, driven strongly at a local level. Key messages and assurances will be communicated with parents and key stakeholders particularly that this is not an exercise to reduce services for individual learners, that children will continue to receive services based on their needs, and to provide updates on improvements.
- 60 I plan to publicly announce the service delivery improvements that will be piloted in the Waiariki / Bay of Plenty Ministry region detailed in this paper.

Consultation

- 61 In preparing this paper, the Ministry has consulted with the Treasury, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Education Review Office, Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, the State Services Commission and the Department for Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Financial implications

- 62 There may be financial implications when there is a better understanding of levels of demand and of the population. Any cost implications will be signalled [REDACTED] and/or in the March 2017 report to Cabinet.
- 63 The intent is to invest more in Communications Services, especially in the early years. The Ministry is investigating ways to fill gaps in provision of speech and language services [REDACTED]. The intent over time is to invest to mitigate and manage demand more effectively through earliest response and intervention. This will need to be achieved through new investment to ensure that no other services and support are impacted.

Human rights

- 64 The proposals are consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. They support Government's commitment under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which includes the right to schooling without any type of discrimination, including on the basis of disability, and places strong emphasis on child well-being and development in an inclusive education system.

Legislative implications

- 65 Changing terminology will have legislative implications.

Regulatory impact assessment

- 66 A regulatory impact assessment is not required at this stage.

Gender implications

- 67 There are no direct gender implications.

Disability perspective

- 68 The proposals are consistent with Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Article 24 recognises the rights of persons with disabilities to education, with a view to people being able to realise this right without discrimination and on the basis of equality of opportunity.
- 69 The changes are consistent with the draft outcomes statement for education which was proposed as part of the revision of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. This included the provision of an excellent education for disabled people, create long term support systems centred on the individual and enable disabled youth to lead full and active lives.
- 70 The direction also aligns with the commitment in the Disability Strategy to the development of an outcomes framework. Outcomes around presence, participation and wellbeing and progress and achievement in education will be proposed for inclusion in the framework.

Recommendations

- 71 I recommend that the Committee:
- 1 **note** that, in November 2014, Cabinet agreed to the Education Work Programme aimed at improving educational outcomes for every child and young person, including strengthening inclusion by updating the special education (learning support) system [CAB (14) 38/5 refers]
 - 2 **note** that, in July 2016, Cabinet agreed to work to strengthen the inclusiveness of the education system [CAB-16-MIN-0310 refers] by:
 - 2.1 undertaking detailed design of a new service delivery model that is child-centred, collaborative, features learning plans for individuals and has a single point of contact and accountability
 - 2.2 examining changes to the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), Communication Services and Behaviour Services to improve efficiency and flexibility
 - 2.3 doing further work on the implications of changing special education terminology to improve the inclusiveness of the education system
 - 3 **note** that this paper advances work for the March 2017 report back on the Learning Support (Special Education) Update, and outlines progress to date

Service delivery model and collection of individual student data

- 4 **agree** to an improved service delivery model that consists of:
- 4.1 a new single point of access providing a streamlined process for parents and schools/kura to access support for their child
 - 4.2 local learning support teams to integrate flexible, tailored and dedicated solutions for learners
 - 4.3 implementing a Lead Practitioner for each learner receiving support to be the single point of contact
 - 4.4 collection of individual student data relating to learning support and achievement to inform appropriate decision making

- 5 **note** that the collection of individual student data will improve the accountability of the system and resulting outcomes
- 6 **agree** to a Waiariki / Bay of Plenty pilot from the start of the 2017 school year to test the proposed new service design model
- 7 **note** that a project team and governance for the pilot will be responsible for management of the pilot, resource planning, risk management, and development of tools, systems and processes
- 8 **note** that the Ministry will regularly engage with key learning support stakeholders such as the Disability Commissioner throughout the pilot to further develop the design and seek feedback
- 9 **note** that key success factors and indicators will be collected by the Ministry as the pilot progresses to measure the effectiveness of the model and inform the focus of the ongoing evaluation
- 10 **note** that I will report back to Cabinet in March 2017 on the pilot of the new service delivery model and options for national implementation, and further detail on the mixed model of delivery that uses a combination of public, private and NGO providers

Improving investment decisions

- 11 **note** that the Ministry of Education, in consultation with Ministries of Health and Social Development, is reviewing the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme to create alternative options for 18-21 year olds to identify how better to support these ORS students
- 12 **note** the potential to address current service delivery barriers for Communication Services through options around support in early years, and extending contract partnerships with existing NGOs
- 13 **note** that, to meet increasing demand for services particularly in early years, the Ministry will increasingly be reliant on contracting out for services
- 14 **note** that the Ministry of Education will seek agreement from the State Services Commission to exclude frontline learning support staff (special education staff) from the core government administration cap, similar to other agency front line staff
- 15 **note** that the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education will improve information sharing from the B4 School Check to target support earlier where possible
- 16 **note** that the Ministry of Education will collect and manage students' learning support data from schools, to better inform decision-making for learning support needs and improve accountability.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Hekia Parata

Minister of Education